



Contact: Gretchen Wolfram  
317/916-7304  
317/255-2640 (home)

For Immediate Release  
Nov. 20, 2003

### Lilly Endowment awards 16 additional grants to “sustain pastoral excellence”

Continuing to focus attention and energy on supporting the work of many of the country’s pastoral leaders, Lilly Endowment Inc. has awarded 16 grants totaling \$26.1 million to religiously affiliated organizations across the country.

The “Sustaining Pastoral Excellence” program, begun last year, has established projects to enable ministers of many Christian traditions to create environments for ongoing biblical study, theological reflection and spiritual renewal, as well as for developing sustained friendships and mutual support opportunities. The three- to five-year awards announced today range from \$616,094 to \$2 million.

These newest 16 projects added to the program join the first “cohort” of 47 grants made last year. Grant awards for all 63 projects that are now part of the program total \$84 million.

Said Craig Dykstra, Endowment vice president for religion: “The Endowment’s current religion grantmaking revolves around two major and interlocking considerations:

(more)

Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Program  
Add 1

identifying, nurturing and educating a talented new generation of pastors and, second, recognizing and supporting the excellent ones we have. Not surprisingly, we know that healthy, engaged, thoughtful, dedicated ministers go hand in hand with healthy, vibrant and effective congregations.

“Frankly, even though pastors’ lives are busy and ‘people-oriented,’ many feel a sense of isolation,” he explained. “Over time, this results in diminished opportunities to engage in some of the crucial activities that led them to ministry in the first place— intellectual and spiritual searching and discovery, pursuit of scholarship and writing, fellowship with colleagues, strong relationships with loved ones and with God. Most of these Sustaining Pastoral Excellence programs address the need to reconnect and to engage in an ongoing way in the kinds of experiences and practices that keep ministry alive and strong.”

Over the past few years, the Endowment has put several programs in place to encourage current pastors in their work. One route has been to establish clergy renewal programs that enable pastors and their families to take some time away from the daily pressures of pastoral life, replenish their energies, and deepen the spiritual reservoirs of their ministries. The sixth season of the Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations was announced last summer, and the 117 recipients of the fourth National Clergy Renewal Program awards will be announced next week.

“Our experience has shown us that, besides individual sabbatical programs, opportunities for pastors to get together in peer groups for sustained mutual support, spiritual renewal, and ongoing development of their pastoral skills are equally important. So we invited ‘any nonprofit organization committed to supporting pastoral work and prepared to create or enhance a high-quality pastoral leadership program’ to submit a proposal in our Sustaining Pastoral Excellence program,” Dykstra said.

(more)

Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Program  
Add 2

“Judging from the response, we seem to have tapped into a wellspring of interest. More than 700 institutions put time and thought into proposals for this competitive program. In the beginning, we were considering awarding only 25 grants, but the enthusiastic and well-thought-out proposals warranted some changes in our original intentions. Not only were we able to expand the number of grants we intended to make last year, we are also able to make these additional awards this year,” he said.

In its request for proposals, the Endowment noted that it would be particularly interested in supporting programs that are shaped by pastoral experience and designed and implemented by pastors themselves. “We believe that excellence in ministry is best supported and sustained when the pastors themselves take primary responsibility for their own ongoing renewal and development,” said Dykstra.

Represented among the grantees from many Christian faith traditions are theological schools, regional and national judicatories from large and small denominations, church-related colleges and universities, ecumenical organizations, retreat centers, and congregations, among others.

Most programs serve racially mixed groups of pastors, but four programs are aimed explicitly at African Americans, three at Hispanics, and two at pastors from the Asian Rim who serve on the West Coast.

Most offer opportunities for pastors at any stage of their career, though several focus particularly on new pastors.

Peer group learning—that is, small groups of pastors who meet regularly for several years for ongoing renewal and mutual support—forms the basis for most projects. Many programs include a mentoring or coaching component. Most projects involve some form of sustained study or training, but they employ a variety of educational settings and methods.

“We will be most interested in following these projects over the next few years,” Dykstra said. “They offer the promise of meaningful renewal for many pastors in this country. These newest grants add even more depth and richness to the program.”

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1) List and description of the latest 16 Sustaining Pastoral Excellence grantees**
- 2) List of the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence grants approved in 2002 (a more complete description of these grants may be found on the program's Web site, [www.pastoralexcellence.org](http://www.pastoralexcellence.org).)**

*Sustaining Pastoral Excellence  
grants approved in 2003*

**CALIFORNIA**

THE PRESBYTERY OF SAN FRANCISCO, Berkeley  
Healthy Pastors for Healthy Congregations  
\$616,094

The project will focus on three key components: enhancing the presbytery's program for new clergy in transition from seminary to parish, providing specialized training and peer learning for pastors serving churches becoming more racially and ethnically diverse, and aiding pastors in new church development and urban church redevelopment settings.

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

WESLEY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, Washington  
G. Douglass Lewis Center for Church Leadership  
\$1.7 million

The project will build upon the seminary's strong network of congregations, judicatories and church-related agencies to strengthen partnerships that provide helpful resources and support for clergy. The project will create cohorts of pastors to practice and hone pastoral skills, engage in theological reflection and foster spiritual growth. The center also will initiate activities resulting in an effective church executive leadership program.

**ILLINOIS**

EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH, Chicago  
\$1,674,784

In collaboration with the North Park Theological Seminary, this denomination will begin a program to create ongoing collegial discussion groups for pastors on biblical and theological topics related to competencies in preaching, leading, caring and teaching. The project also will offer restorative retreats and minigrants for renewal of pastors, develop a network of trained spiritual directors, and launch a center at the seminary to help students establish spiritual disciplines early in their vocational formation, as well as to train spiritual directors to help pastors throughout their lives.

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY, Chicago  
\$2 million

The university's Institute for Pastoral Studies, in partnership with the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago, will launch a new program for pastoral leadership teams designed to strengthen ministry in their local churches. Parish leadership teams of priests and professional lay ministers will participate in educational activities to increase the quality of each team's ministry and enhance the competencies of team members. Each parish team may apply for minigrants to implement learning plans they have developed.

## **INDIANA**

BETHANY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, Richmond

Academy for Ministerial Leadership

\$2 million

The seminary will begin a two-part project that will be led by the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, an agency jointly sponsored with the Church of the Brethren General Board. The Vital Pastor program will invite small cohorts of excellent pastors to design and implement their own learning plans to enhance and sustain self-identified competency areas such as biblical study, preaching and pastoral care. The Advanced Foundations of Church Leadership program will engage cohorts of 10 to 12 pastors in learning experiences to improve their leadership capacities by enriching their spiritual, intellectual, relational and physical health.

## **KENTUCKY**

ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, Wilmore

Pastoral Seasons as Life and Ministry (PSALM) project

\$2 million

The project will address the need of seminarians and pastoral leaders to be connected with networks of spiritual friends and to be replenished by continuing engagement with classic practices of Christian life and faith. Programs are planned for seminarians to develop spiritual disciplines and friendships while they are training to be pastors, and for current pastors to participate in special seminars, academies and theological reflection weeks on campus with faculty.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA), Louisville

Re-Forming Ministry Project

\$1,966,683

The project will encourage pastoral excellence by fostering collaborative activities among church leaders who serve in the three traditional roles of the teaching office in the Reformed tradition: pastors, theological teachers and church officials. Participants will forge new patterns of theological reflection and teaching and then share their work through conferences, consultations and presentations. These activities will then influence wider circles of pastors, teachers and church officials, thus deepening theological knowledge through the church as well as strengthening the capacity of pastors to engage in sound theological teaching for their congregations.

## **MICHIGAN**

ECUMENICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY (ETS), Detroit

\$1,209,313

Deeply rooted in its community, ETS has provided continuing education and cooperative degree programs since 1957. Through this grant, ETS will offer pastoral peer learning groups that will meet over three years to read and reflect on excellent ministry, travel together for educational experiences, and implement plans for increasing effective ministry in their own settings. The program will provide a chance for pastors from a wide

(Michigan, cont.)

range of backgrounds to work together to enhance trust and cooperation within the religious community as it addresses some of the Detroit area's urban challenges.

ST. FRANCIS RETREAT CENTER, DeWitt  
Program for Ongoing Pastoral Formation  
\$1,399,996

Components of this program will foster the well-being of an ecumenical community of ministers in south central Michigan, an area where access to supportive pastoral resources is limited. St. Francis will create a regional pastoral resource center and offer a variety of retreats, conferences, workshops and pastoral peer groups. Minigrants also will be available to groups of leaders for study and group reflection.

## **MISSOURI**

COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, St. Louis  
Rooted in Grace for a Lifetime of Ministry  
\$2 million

Covenant Seminary, along with the Presbyterian Church in America and with Reformed and Westminster seminaries, will nurture Reformed and evangelical pastors through three programs: renewal retreats, vocational discipleship retreats, and a pastor-in-residence program. Congregational ruling elders, together with their pastors, will deepen their understanding of these distinctive but interrelated offices within their congregations. The project also will foster key relationships of pastors with peers, spouse and family, as well as congregational elders and laity.

## **NEBRASKA**

NEBRASKA CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, Lincoln  
Transforming Covenants  
\$1,315,682

The conference will form a partnership with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the state for a program that will encourage the formation of Covenantal Learning Groups and Pastoral Excellence Teams composed of clergy and laity who will work with neighboring congregations to help them devise and implement strategies of excellence and change. The project will offer minigrants for clergy and clusters of congregations to develop self-directed learning plans to improve and sustain good ministry in their locales.

## **NEW MEXICO**

SAMARITAN CENTER OF ALBUQUERQUE (SAMARITAN COUNSELING CENTER)  
\$686,327

The center will work in partnership with the Norbertine Community of the Santa Maria de la Vid Priory to cultivate spiritual vitality among clergy in the Southwest through

(New Mexico, cont.)

spiritual retreats, prayer and support groups, as well as spiritual direction and counseling to pastors. The project also will promote greater involvement of judicatories in providing spiritual growth resources for pastors.

## **NEW YORK**

REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA (RCA), New York

Revitalized Leadership for a Renewed Church

\$2 million

After a 1998 study on how to revitalize ministry, this denomination discovered that peer learning groups were a fundamental component to excellence in parish ministry, and it has been organizing groups for pastors on a modest scale ever since. This grant helps the denomination build on its own momentum by enabling it to offer “covenantal peer groups” to almost 400 RCA pastors nationwide. The project will also interact with lay congregational leaders. Nearly a third of the funds will allow pastors and lay leadership teams—as well as church clusters—to receive support that will help them with plans to renew ministry in their churches.

## **NORTH CAROLINA**

BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION OF NORTH CAROLINA, Cary

Learning Communities Project

\$1,579,960

With this project 70 key pastors from North Carolina and surrounding states will be recruited and formed into two ecumenical learning communities, one for excellent younger pastors and the other for seasoned clergy leading thriving congregations. Each learning group will construct educational and skill-building practices to identify and cultivate excellence in ministry. These influential pastors will then reflect and write on ministry in ways that will enable them to foster excellence in others.

## **TENNESSEE**

AMERICAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, Nashville

Vibrant Ministries: Tools for Sustaining Excellence in Pastoral Ministry

\$2 million

The seminary, also known as American Baptist College (ABC), has designed a project to engage more ministry students and ABC’s large constituency of working pastors in three activities: study circles for theological reading, discussion and reflection; educational events aimed at renewing congregational and pastoral ministry through worship; and opportunities to enhance pastors’ health and spirituality. ABC’s new John R. Lewis and Julius R. Scruggs Center for Pastoral Leadership will conduct the project.

**TEXAS**

TEXAS METHODIST FOUNDATION (TMF), Austin

Clergy Leadership Initiative

\$2 million

The foundation will expand and enhance its Clergy Leadership Initiative. The project will help pastors in the six Texas Annual Conferences lead their churches more effectively by offering clergy development peer groups that will develop self-directed programs on leadership, self-care and spiritual formation; sponsoring educational seminars; hosting a variety of other gatherings for clergy and bishops statewide; and sharing learning from the project with the agencies, judicatories and partners TMF is developing through the project.

\* \* \*

*Sustaining Pastoral Excellence  
grants approved in 2002*

(For a more complete description of these grants, please go to the program's Web site,  
[www.pastoralexcellence.org](http://www.pastoralexcellence.org))

**ALABAMA**

NORTH ALABAMA CONFERENCE, THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, Birmingham  
Institute for Clergy Excellence  
\$2 million

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY, Birmingham  
Pursuing Pastoral Excellence  
\$2 million

**ARKANSAS**

UNITED METHODIST CENTER (STATE HEADQUARTERS), Little Rock  
Connected in Christ  
\$2 million

**CALIFORNIA**

WESTMINSTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN CALIFORNIA, Escondido  
Center for Pastoral Refreshment  
\$868,174

**CONNECTICUT**

YALE UNIVERSITY, New Haven  
Faith as a Way of Life  
\$1,558,387

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

DOMINICAN HOUSE OF STUDIES, Washington  
Sustaining Excellent Pastors  
\$429,228

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR LAY MINISTRY (NALM) (formerly in Chicago)  
Developing and Sustaining Pastoral Leadership in the Catholic Church  
\$2 million

(District of Columbia, cont.)

LOTT CAREY BAPTIST FOREIGN MISSION SOCIETY, Washington  
Building Networks, Broadening Vision  
\$1,995,266

**GEORGIA**

COLUMBIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, Decatur  
Cultivation of Pastoral Excellence through Sabbath, Study and Service  
\$1,299,468

COOPERATIVE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP, Atlanta  
Initiative for Ministerial Excellence  
\$1,995,748

**ILLINOIS**

CENTER FOR NEW COMMUNITY, Oak Park  
Rural Pastors Institute  
\$752,855

**INDIANA**

BENEDICT INN AND RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER, Beech Grove/Indianapolis  
Women Touched by Grace  
\$451,895

BOARD OF CHURCH EXTENSION OF DISCIPLES OF CHRIST, Indianapolis  
Sustaining New Church Pastoral Excellence  
\$1,670,920

CHURCH OF GOD MINISTRIES, Anderson  
To Sustain and Nourish  
\$1,654,207

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME, Notre Dame  
Sustaining Excellence in Episcopal Ministry  
\$930,205

**KENTUCKY**

CHURCH OF THE APOSTLES, Lexington  
The Pastor in Community  
\$289,615

**LOUISIANA**

LOUISIANA ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, Baton Rouge  
Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Project  
\$701,600

**MARYLAND**

ST. MARY'S SEMINARY AND UNIVERSITY, Baltimore  
Mantle of Elijah, A Training Program for Priest Mentors  
\$591,946

**MASSACHUSETTS**

BOSTON UNIVERSITY  
Sustaining Urban Pastoral Excellence Program  
\$1,998,850

EMMANUEL GOSPEL CENTER, Boston  
Institute for Pastoral Excellence  
\$631,500

EPISCOPAL DIVINITY SCHOOL, Cambridge  
Promoting Excellence in an Underserved Area  
\$1,593,117

MASSACHUSETTS CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, Framingham  
Sustaining Pastoral Excellence project  
\$1,508,707

**MICHIGAN**

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA, Grand Rapids  
Creating a Culture of Pastoral Excellence  
\$1,999,278

WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA, Holland  
Journey Groups  
\$814,746

**MINNESOTA**

MINNESOTA ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, Minneapolis  
Sustaining Pastoral Excellence project  
\$867,711

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY, Collegeville  
Cultivating a Pastoral *Conversio*  
\$1,970,508

(Minnesota, cont.)

ST. PAUL'S MONASTERY, St. Paul  
Called for Service, Formed in Christ  
\$644,935

**MISSISSIPPI**

FOUNDATON FOR THE MID SOUTH, Jackson  
Building Pastoral Leadership in the Low-Income Communities of the Mid South  
\$2 million

MILLSAPS COLLEGE, Jackson  
Sustaining Pastoral Excellence project  
\$1,999,288

**NEW JERSEY**

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, Princeton  
Project in Pastoral Theological Excellence  
\$891,069

**NEW YORK**

AUBURN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, New York  
New York Sabbatical Institute  
\$824,630

UPSTATE ENEW YORK SYNOD OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
(ELCA), Syracuse  
Ecumenical Pastoral Excellence Initiative  
\$439,071

**NORTH CAROLINA**

TRIANGLE PASTORAL COUNSELING, Raleigh  
Sustaining Congregational Pastors  
\$685,393

**OHIO**

AKRON AREA ASSOCIATION OF CHURCHES, Akron  
Pastor Parish Peer Study Group of Northeast Ohio  
\$513,450

(Ohio, cont.)

ASHLAND UNIVERSITY, Ashland  
Sustaining Pastoral Excellence project  
\$998,106

**OKLAHOMA**

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF TULSA, Tulsa  
Program of Pastoral Renewal  
\$344,231

**PENNSYLVANIA**

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES IN THE USA (formerly American Baptist Board of Education and  
Publication), Valley Forge  
Together in Ministry  
\$1,959,600

**TENNESSEE**

CHURCH OF GOD SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY, Cleveland  
Walking in the Spirit  
\$252,355

MEMPHIS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,  
Memphis  
Sustaining Pastoral Excellence through Scholarship, Piety and Justice  
\$1,920,145

UPPER ROOM, Nashville  
Companions in Ministry  
\$627,053

**TEXAS**

ASSOCIACION PARA LE EDUCACION TEOLOGICA HISPANA, Austin  
Program of Latino Pastoral *Tertulias*  
\$851,220

AUSTIN PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, Austin  
College of Pastoral Leaders  
\$1,563,641

OBLATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY, San Antonio  
International Priest Internship Program  
\$1,053,141

**VIRGINIA**

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN VIRGINIA, Alexandria

The First Three Years

\$833,199

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AND PRESBYTERIAN SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN  
EDUCATION (Union/PSCE), Richmond

*Rehoboth*

\$958,500

**WASHINGTON**

SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

Pastoral Leadership Program

\$1,896,915

**WISCONSIN**

AMERICAN BAPTIST ASSEMBLY, Green Lake

Center for Excellence in Congregational Leadership

\$2 million

\* \* \*